



## BOATING SAFETY

### Q. Are drowning deaths involving watercraft common?

A. Yes. On average, 32 people drown every year while taking part in watercraft activities.

### Q. What types of watercraft are involved?

A. Any type of watercraft. Some of the more common types are small aluminium boat (tinnys), jet skis, kayaks, motorized water craft, sailing boats and inflatable dingys.

### Q. How do watercraft drowning deaths occur?

A. Drowning deaths while boating can occur when people are not wearing PFDs, when they drink alcohol and fall in, when they are unprepared to cope with weather conditions, when watercraft collide, and when a water craft is not seaworthy.

### Q. What is a PFD and why do I need one?

A. Any garment worn on the body to assist with flotation is called a personal flotation device (PFD). PFDs include devices previously known as lifejackets, buoyancy vests or buoyancy garments. PFDs are usually classified according to the level of protection they offer the wearer and the wearer's needs.

### Q. Who is responsible for the people on a boat?

A. The captain has overall responsibility for the safety of their passengers, and must ensure there are sufficient lifejackets for all onboard. However, it is the responsibility of each individual to ensure their safety by wearing a PFD, avoiding alcohol, not skylarking, and complying with the captain's requests.

### Q. Does alcohol play a role?

A. Alcohol is a contributing factor in 20% of all adult drowning deaths. Alcohol is often involved in watercraft related deaths.

### Q. How can I help to prevent drowning deaths?

- A. Between outings, have your
- boat inspected regularly for seaworthiness
  - licence for boating valid
  - equipment checked to comply with government regulations
  - capsize and person overboard drills learned and practiced
  - PFDs checked for wear and tear
  - speed limits for area checked

### Just before your trip

- check the weather conditions
- wear and carry suitable clothes for a change in weather
- arrange for someone else to come along
- ensure the boat is not overloaded
- leave word of your planned destination and time of return
- pack a PFD for everyone on the boat
- if it's your first time out, invited along someone with experience in local conditions

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

**1300 RESQ ME**  
(1300 7377 63)



Using a watercraft such as a boat, canoe or jet ski is a hobby enjoyed by many Australians. Watercraft come in a range of sizes and styles, from kayaks to motorized boats and rubber dings to sailing vessels.

### Boating CHECKLIST:

- keep your weight and centred when entering and leaving a small boat
- stow all gear safely
- everyone wearing PFDs
- follow the boating traffic rules
- avoid swimming areas, weirs, rocks and other crafts
- monitor weather reports
- look out for warning signs of bad weather
- let people know your destination and when you expect to return

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